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GOVERNOR MIRIAM A. FERGUSON

by Ralph W. Steen

January 20, 1925 was a beautiful day in Austin, Texas, and thousands of people converged on the city to pay tribute to the first woman to serve the state as governor. Long before time for the inaugural ceremony to begin every space in the gallery of the House of Representatives was taken and thousands who could not gain admission blocked hallways and stood outside the capitol. After brief opening ceremonies, Chief Justice C.M. Cureton administered the oath of office to Lieutenant Governor Barry Miller and then to Governor Miriam A. Ferguson. Pat M. Neff, the retiring governor, introduced Mrs. Ferguson to the audience and she delivered a brief inaugural address.

The governor called for heart in government, proclaimed political equality for women, and asked for the good will and the prayers of the women of Texas. The address closed with the statement; "With love for all, with malice toward none, trusting in God, I consecrate my life to my state."

Several bands were in Austin for the inauguration but most attention focused on the 142nd Infantry Band, widely known as the Old Gray Mare Band. The reason for the interest was the association with the band of May Peterson (Mrs. E.O. Thompson), a star of the Metropolitan Opera. During the ceremony, the band played and Miss Peterson sang "The Eyes of Texas" as the inaugural party entered the House Chamber, "Put on Your Old Gray Bonnet" when Mrs. Ferguson was introduced, "The Star Spangled Banner" after Mrs. Ferguson's address, and "Dixie" as the inaugural party left the hall.

In the governor's office, Mrs. Ferguson discovered that Neff had left a Bible for her open at Psalms 119, verse 115: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." It was a verse which became one of her favorites. The new governor was a calm and most dignified individual and the *Dallas News* declared that the candidate of ginghams and bonnet had been replaced by a handsomely dressed woman of charm. The path which Mrs. Ferguson followed from birth on a Bell County farm to the governor's office led her in many directions including an earlier stop at the governor's mansion.

Ralph W. Steen is President of the East Texas Historical Association, 1978-1979, and President-Emeritus of Stephen F. Austin State University.

Miriam Amanda Wallace was born June 13, 1875 and was one of six children of Joseph Wallace and Eliza Garrison Ferguson Wallace. Her parents owned a substantial amount of land and were looked upon as one of the more wealthy families in Bell County. At the time of Miriam's birth, a boy named James Edward Ferguson was approaching his fourth birthday on a farm about seven miles from the Wallace farm. Jim Ferguson and Miriam Wallace were to share much of their lives. Had he lived, the first husband of Mrs. Wallace would have been Jim's uncle.

Miriam Wallace spent some time in a public school and, on other occasions, was taught by a tutor who lived in the Wallace home. She attended Salado College for two years and Baylor College for Women in Belton for a short while. Life in the Wallace family underwent a major change in 1898 with the death of Mr. Wallace, but the family was left with large land holdings and a substantial amount of cash. After the death of Mr. Wallace, James E. Ferguson who was working his way up the economic ladder in Belton, found it necessary to visit his aunt on numerous occasions to discuss matters of finance. Other matters were discussed also and on December 31, 1899 Ferguson and Miriam Wallace were married. They lived in Belton in a white cottage with red trim, a gift of the brides's mother. Two daughters, Ouida and Dorrace, were born to the Fergusons.

In 1906, the Fergusons sold their share of a bank in Belton which Jim had managed and moved to Temple where he organized the Temple State Bank and became its president. The Ferguson home in Temple, located only a few blocks from the center of town, was typical of the homes of successful businessmen of the period. It was a two-story house with nine rooms, two galleries and the inevitable cupola. Jim, who never learned that there are strangers in the world, was well liked in Temple and the bank prospered. Mrs. Ferguson, on the other hand, never learned the art of being nice to people whom she didn't like, and was noted for lack of tact and diplomacy. She took no part in club affairs and very little part in church affairs. One reason may have been that her health was not good. A more important reason was her devotion to her home and her children. To a woman of Mrs. Ferguson's character and lack of interest in public affairs, the decision of her husband to become a candidate for governor must have been a great shock.

James E. Ferguson, a man who had never held any political office, announced late in 1913 that he would be a candidate for governor in the Democratic primaries of 1914. His announcement elicited little response and most observers felt that he was wasting

his time and his money. A number of things worked in his favor, not the least of which was his remarkable ability as a campaigner. During the campaign, he had the support of most anti-prohibitionists, although a number of anti-prohibition leaders opposed him, and he won the lasting support of thousands of tenant farmers and owners of small farms. To the surprise of many Texans, probably including Mrs. Ferguson, he won both the Democratic nomination and the election. The result was that in January, 1915 the Ferguson family moved into the governor's mansion.

Austin in 1915 was a city of about 29,000 people, and in a city of that size there was no possible way for the wife of the governor to ignore the people around her. The Austin social world in 1915 was made up of three groups: the old Austin families, the university people, and the politicians. It was difficult for a person to move in more than one group as the old families looked upon the politicians as upstarts and incompetents, and the politicians looked upon the old families as snobs. The university people, or the university crowd, as Ferguson ultimately came to call them, had little in common with either of the other groups. Mrs. Ferguson quickly realized that she needed help in steering a course through this confused social world and employed a social secretary to assist her. She was the first wife of a Texas governor to have a social secretary and some opponents tried to make political capital of this, but with little success. As a matter of fact, the demands upon the mistress of the mansion were growing along with the growth of the state and the government.

During the Ferguson administration, the mansion was definitely not a center of social activity, but Mrs. Ferguson did hold the required receptions and dinners, had family parties, and invited distinguished visitors to be her guests. Mrs. Ferguson was a strict prohibitionist in practice and no alcohol ever found its way into one of her punch bowls. One guest is said to have commented that there was not a conversation in a bowl of her punch. She did, of course, make public appearances with the governor.

Ferguson easily won reelection in 1916, but the bright political picture turned dark in 1917 as the governor managed to get himself impeached during the first year of his second term. He was convicted by the Senate sitting as a Court of Impeachment, was removed from office, and was made ineligible to hold any office of trust or profit under the State of Texas. Thus it was that in the fall of 1917 the Fergusons returned to Temple, and Mrs. Ferguson was even less interested in social affairs than she had been before. She had the firm conviction that the impeachment

proceedings were "the blackest page in Texas history." They suffered serious financial losses as a result of their political difficulties but by no means lived in poverty.

Governor Ferguson did not react to impeachment by retiring from politics. Instead, he began publication of a newspaper named *The Ferguson Forum* which his enemies called *The Ferguson For Rum* and which he spoke of as his "little Christian weekly," and announced as a candidate for governor in 1918. He assured his friends that, despite the ruling of the Court of Impeachment, he would hold the office if he got the votes. W.P. Hobby, who had become governor when Ferguson was removed, was a candidate for a full term in the office. Hobby, with the substantial assistance of some laws passed by a special session of the Legislature, won an easy victory in the primary and also won the election. In 1920, Ferguson organized his own party and was a candidate for President. He accomplished no more than keeping his name before the public, but it might have been good for the country if he had won since the victor was Warren G. Harding.

Developments in 1922 made it a critical year in the political life of the Fergusons. The former governor decided that it would be a waste of time to oppose Pat Neff, who was seeking a second term as governor, but that United States Senator Charles A. Culberson was vulnerable. There remained the question of Ferguson's eligibility for a place on the ballot, and as a hedge on this issue both Mr. Ferguson and Mrs. Ferguson announced for the office. Mrs. Ferguson reached this decision with reluctance as she had no desire to be a Senator and did not wish to live in Washington. It was ultimately decided that Mr. Ferguson was an eligible candidate for the United States Senate and Mrs. Ferguson withdrew from the race. Ferguson failed to win election to the Senate as he lost a bitter second primary race to Earle B. Mayfield, but the campaign was not without its value. The public had been made aware of Mrs. Ferguson as a possible candidate for office, the Ferguson name had been kept before the public, and Jim had emerged as the leading figure in opposition in the rising political strength of the Ku Klux Klan. Even a novice in politics could see that a Ferguson would seek the governor's office in 1924.

Ten years after his first campaign for the office James E. Ferguson announced as a candidate for governor in the 1924 Democratic primaries. The courts ruled that he was not eligible for a place on the ballot and Mrs. Ferguson promptly became a candidate. Her platform called for vindication and for a strong anti-mask (i.e. anti-Klan) law. She promised to make the prison

system self-sustaining, to improve highways and rural schools, to veto all liquor legislation, and to reduce state expenditures by $15,000,000. The statements concerning rural schools, the prison system, and liquor legislation were almost identical with those of the Ferguson platform of 1914. There was never any pretense that Mrs. Ferguson would be an independent governor. Both stated that Jim would assist the governor in every way possible and they and their friends freely declared that so long as Texas had a Governor Ferguson, it made no difference who signed on the dotted line. They bluntly offered "Two governors for the price of one."

In opening her campaign, Mrs. Ferguson pleaded: "Mother, father, son or brother won't you help me? Jim and I are not seeking revenge; we are asking for the name of our children to be cleared of this awful judgment. If any wrong has been done, God in Heaven knows we have suffered enough." In stating her qualifications, she said: "I know I can't talk about the constitution and the making of laws and the science of government like some other candidates, . . . but I have a trusting and abiding faith that my Redeemer liveth . . .." To some degree she upstaged W. Lee O'Daniel and his Golden Rule campaign by fourteen years.

A total of nine candidates sought the Democratic nomination for governor in 1924, and four deserve to be classed as major candidates. They are Mrs. Ferguson, Felix D. Robertson who was considered to be the candidate of the Klan, T.W. Davidson the retiring lieutenant governor, and Lynch Davidson a former lieutenant governor whose campain slogan was "Lynch is a Cinch." Both Davidsons expressed opposition to the Klan.

Both Fergusons usually appeared on the same platform. Mrs. Ferguson would be presented first and would make a few remarks about vindication and love of home. She would then release the platform to Jim and the old master would say little about the platform but a great deal about the Klan and his political enemies. In later stages of the campaign, they sometimes traveled separately with Mrs. Ferguson going chiefly to engagements where it was thought the crowds would be friendly. She became an acceptable speaker.

Most of the state newspapers supported one of the Davidsons during the first primary, but their news columns were frequently used for stories about the woman candidate. Just a few weeks after she announced, *The Dallas News* ran a feature story about Mrs. Ferguson with pictures showing her in a chicken yard, in a lot with a horse, in a kitchen peeling peaches, and in a cotton

field wearing a bonnet but not picking cotton. The bonnet, incidently, was borrowed and was worn inside out as the candidate feared it might not be clean. The use of the bonnet led, perhaps inevitably, to the use of "Put on Your Old Gray Bonnet" as a campaign theme for Mrs. Ferguson and for the remainder of her life she was seldom around a band or an orchestra without hearing the tune. It took editors only a short while to condense Miriam A. into "Ma" and before the campaign was many weeks old "Me for Ma" stickers began to appear over the state. Stickers saying "No Ma for me - Too much Pa" also appeared.

Robertson led the first primary with 193,508 votes. Mrs. Ferguson was second with 164,424. Lynch Davidson received 141,208 and T.W. Davidson received 125,001. Many voters were unable to distinguish between the Davidsons and it is interesting to speculate on what the result might have been had there been only one Davidson in the list of candidates.

In the second primary the voters had a difficult choice. They were asked to choose between the wife of an impeached governor and a man looked upon as the candidate of an invisible empire some of whose members worked at night with whips, buckets of tar and sacks of feathers. The issues came to be Fergusonism and the Ku Klux Klan. Both Davidsons asked their supporters to vote for Mrs. Ferguson and large daily newspapers, which had fought Ferguson consistently since 1914, endorsed Mrs. Ferguson. The campaign was extremely bitter and Mr. Ferguson must be admired for his courage in standing on platforms all over Texas and denouncing the Klan. Mrs. Ferguson also appeared on platforms where danger may have existed but her language was much calmer than that of her husband. When the votes were counted, it was found that Mrs. Ferguson was the winner with 413,751 to 316,019 for Robertson.

Republican leaders decided the Democratic campaign had been so bitter that 1924 would be an excellent year in which to mount a major campaign for the governorship. Dr. George C. Butte resigned his position as Dean of the School of Law at the University of Texas to become the Republican nominee. Thousands of voters did bolt the Democratic fold and vote the Republican ticket but Butte lost by a vote of 294,970 to 422,558.

There can be no doubt that when the newly inaugurated governor entered her office on January 20, 1925 and found Neff's marked Bible, the Fergusons had won the second chance they had sought since 1917. It remained to be seen whether the voters had given that second chance in wisdom or in error.

Mr. Ferguson made several trips to Austin from Temple after

the election and remained in the capital as the date approached for the Legislature to convene. He acted as the governor, not as the husband of the governor. As early as January 9, 1925 an Austin newspaper was speaking of proposed appointments as "Jim's" appointments, and expressed the belief that he would have trouble gaining confirmation for some of them. Ferguson also took part in the race for Speaker of the House of Representatives. When the House convened on January 13, Lee Satterwhite of Panhandle (Carson County) was elected over three other candidates. The election of Satterwhite was looked upon by some observers as evidence that the House was declaring itself independent of both Ferguson and the Klan. Mrs. Ferguson made the trip from Temple to Austin by train several days before the inauguration and remained at the home of her daughter, Mrs. George Nalle, until after the inauguration.

According to Mrs. Nalle (Ouida Ferguson), the Fergusons left the mansion in 1917 in a Packard Twin Six with Mrs. Ferguson driving. The car was stored, but after the victory in 1924 it was cleaned, polished, given a new battery and new tires and in January driven to Austin. Mrs. Ferguson drove from the Nalle residence to the mansion in the old Packard as evidence of triumph.

As most administrations do, this one began with a controversy over appointments. When the legislature convened on January 13, Governor Neff submitted a long list of appointees to the Senate for confirmation. Mrs. Ferguson - or both Fergusons - wanted these appointments rejected so that Ferguson friends could be named to the various positions. As is customary, the Senate confirmed some of the Neff appointees and rejected some of them. There was some criticism of the attempts of James E. Ferguson to influence the Senate in the matter of confirmations. In fact, there would be criticism of James E. Ferguson throughout the administration. It was a situation which Texans had not experienced before. Mr. Ferguson was a private citizen, a licensed attorney, a shrewd and experienced politician, the chief advisor to and spokesman for the governor, and possibly governor by proxy.

The legislature was diligent and was able to pass the appropriations bill in the regular session so that no special session was immediately necessary. Expenditures were not reduced by $15,000,000 as Mrs. Ferguson had promised but the total amount appropriated increased only slightly over the previous biennium. An Amnesty Act was passed after much controversy which removed penalties assessed any person by a Court of

Impeachment in Texas. It did not name Ferguson. The act proved to be of no value as it was repealed by a later legislature and the courts also held it invalid on the ground that the legislature can not repeal a judicial decision. A stringent anti-mask law was passed but much of it also had difficulty in the courts. The few measures passed which could be described as liquor legislation were promptly vetoed. The proposed child-labor amendment to the Constitution of the United States was rejected. The legislative session was mostly routine, but the same statement can not be made of the executive branch of the government. The administration was marked by almost constant controversy involving a series of developments some of which were branded by the newspapers as major scandals.

Mr. Ferguson was the focal point of most of the storms. Mrs. Ferguson spent some time in the capitol office and undoubtedly made a number of decisions, but she also spent a great deal of time at the mansion. "Governor Jim" was practically always in the office and "citizen Jim" was also busy. The missteps involved matters extending all the way from the *Ferguson Forum* to highway contracts and pardons.

Prior to 1924, the *Forum* had carried little advertising but beginning with the campaign for the governorship in 1924 it came to be looked upon as a valuable advertising medium. Victory editions with dozens of pages of advertising were published on December 18, 1924 and January 2, 1925. While Mrs. Ferguson was in office, some advertisements for the *Forum* were solicited on executive office stationery. There is also evidence that during this period the *Forum* had no standard rates for advertising, and that persons or corporations wishing favorable attention could pay as much as they liked. Some people also found fault with an agreement by which Mr. Ferguson agreed to represent W.T. Eldridge, a man with extensive railroad interests and a long-standing quarrel with the Prison Commission, before the legislature and government agencies during 1925 for a fee of $10,000.

Another source of controversy involved textbook contracts. Mr. Ferguson was elected clerk of the Textbook Commission and met with it. One of the contracts which attracted much attention was with the American Book Company and called for the sale of thousands of copies of a speller to Texas at a price five cents per copy higher than the retail price of a single copy in Cincinnati, Ohio. This was one of the contracts which led to the statement that textbooks in Texas were selected by the Supreme Court.

The Highway Commission got far more attention than the

Textbook Commission. The Highway Commission during most of the Ferguson administration was made up of Frank Lanham, Joe Burkett and John H. Bickett. Most of the contracts were awarded by Lanham and Burkett, as Bickett was ill and seldom attended meetings. Private Citizen Ferguson found time to meet with the Commission and assist in awarding contracts, at least some of which were awarded by negotiation without advertising and without bidding. The two most spectacular contracts were those awarded the American Road Company and the Hoffman Construction Company.

Attorney General Dan Moody brought suit in the 53rd District Court in Austin for the cancellation of the contracts and recovery of excess payments. Exhibits presented to the court showed that the American Road Company had received $1,719,480 for work actually done by other companies for $603,768. By an agreement approved by the court November 20, 1926, the remaining contracts with the company and its permit to do business in Texas were cancelled and the state recovered $600,000. In a similar agreement the Hoffman Construction Company contracts and permit to do business were cancelled and the state recovered $450,000.

The contract for the unbelievable experimental road from Belton to Temple was awarded by this commission. The contract called for the construction of two tracks for northbound traffic and two tracks for southbound traffic with unpaved areas between. The contractor was to be paid his cost plus ten per cent.

The legislature met in special session in September 1926 to validate the bonds of hundreds of road districts. The session was made necessary by a court decision which questioned the legality of the bonds. During this session, the House of Representatives, with the permission of the governor, appointed a committee to investigate state departments. This committee reported to the House of Representatives in January, 1927, and most of the information presented here concerning scandals is taken from the committee report. The committee also pointed out that some contractors had had the wisdom to buy their performance bonds from a relative of the governor who was in the insurance business. In the opinion of the committee the power and prestige of the governor's office were "usurped and dictated by a private citizen, the husband of the governor, for political favoritism and private gain."

A great deal of criticism of the Ferguson administration was directed at the pardon policy. During the campaign Mrs. Ferguson had said that she would follow a liberal pardon policy,

but few people gave "liberal" a sufficiently broad interpretation. During her two years in office, she issued more than 3,000 clemency proclamations and some critics spoke of her use of the power to pardon as the "Texas Open Door Policy." It is not surprising that rumors quickly began circulating implying that pardons were being sold. After more than fifty years these rumors remain rumors. It would be most unusual for a person who bought a pardon to admit it, and certainly no one associated with the administration ever conceded that pardons were sold. It can be added that a person seeking a pardon needed an attorney and that it was good judgment to choose an attorney who was in good standing with the governor. The Fergusons always insisted that most pardons were issued to liquor law violators and this is correct. However, pardons were also issued to persons convicted of murder, theft, arson, rape and other major crimes. A Secretary of State declared that during her last month in office Mrs. Ferguson granted pardons to 417 convicts and that 133 murderers were included in the group.

The newspapers published many stories about pardons but seldom had much to say about the persons pardoned. Occasionally the individuals receiving the pardons were considered worthy of front-page coverage. This was true of the pardons granted to Frank Collier on December 27, 1926, and Dorothy Collier on November 20, 1926. This was due to the fact that Frank Collier had been mayor of Wichita Falls at the time he shot and killed his seventeen year old son-in-law on February 14, 1925, evidently with a great deal of encouragement from his wife, Dorothy Collier.

Mr. Collier was convicted, given a short sentence and entered prison. Mrs. Collier was convicted after a trial conducted in Haskell and given a ten year sentence. She received a pardon within a few days of the review of her case by the Court of Criminal Appeals and never entered the prison. The pardon proclamation for Frank Collier, who had served about one year, states that he is not a criminal and should be released "so he may start all over again." The pardon proclamation for Dorothy Collier declares that she is not guilty and should never have been convicted. There were statements that $10,000 was paid for these pardons but the statements were not made by either a Collier or a Ferguson.

Mrs. Ferguson had said during the campaign in 1924 that she would serve only one term, but in 1926, with her administration under attack from many sides, she announced for a second term. She probably felt that the family name was in need of more

vindication. During this campaign she defended her administration, declared that her goal of vindication had not been achieved as the Amnesty Act mentioned no name, claimed to have reduced appropriations by $10,000,000 and made the prison system self-sustaining, insisted that her pardon policy did not merit criticism, and said that the Highway Department had made a good record. In discussing the pardon policy, she said that it was actuated only by mercy and forgiveness and that the number pardoned had nothing to do with the kind of policy.

Five persons, including two women, challenged Mrs. Ferguson in the 1926 Democratic primary. Lynch Davidson and Attorney General Dan Moody were the only widely-known challengers and the primary quickly developed into a Ferguson-Moody contest. During the campaign, Mrs. Ferguson challenged Moody to agree that if she led him by 25,000 votes in the primary, he would withdraw from the race on condition that she would withdraw from the race and resign as governor if he led her by as much as one vote. Moody accepted the challenge. Moody received 409,732 of the 821,234 votes cast in the primary. Mrs. Ferguson received 283,482 and announced that she would not be a candidate in the second primary and that she would resign within a few weeks. She quickly changed her mind, however, ran in the second primary and completed her term. Moody won an easy victory in the second primary.

Mrs. Ferguson introduced Moody at his inauguration in January, 1927 and left him a Bible marked at the seventh chapter of Matthew, verse 12. The Fergusons had intended returning to Temple after the completion of her term in office, but decided to remain in Austin. After a few months in the Driskill Hotel, they moved to a rented house where they lived until their new home on Windsor Road was completed. Mrs. Ferguson lived quietly but Mr. Ferguson exerted all of his influence in opposition to Moody's legislative program. Moody was a popular governor and in 1928, for the first time since entering politics in 1914, the Fergusons sought no office. Moody had only three opponents in the 1928 Democratic primary and won an easy victory. The Fergusons supported Louis J. Wardlaw.

The Great Depression was blighting the country as time approached for the Democratic primaries in 1930, and eleven candidates sought the nomination for governor. One of them was Miriam A. Ferguson. She and her husband believed a period of economic stress a good time for a name which had always enjoyed the support of workers, tenants and small farmers. Other well known candidates were Ross S. Sterling, chairman of the

Highway Commission; Clint Small, a state senator noted for his advocacy of certain land policies; Earle B. Mayfield, former United States Senator; Barry Miller, the retiring lieutenant governor; and Thomas B. Love, one of the leaders in the Democrats for Hoover movement in 1928.

When the ballots were counted, it was learned that Mrs. Ferguson was in first place and Sterling second. The second primary campaign was so intense that more votes were cast in the second primary than in the first. Had it not been for Sterling's friends this might have been one of the great mismatches of all time. Mrs. Ferguson had developed into an acceptable campaign speaker and Mr. Ferguson was one of the great campaigners in Texas history. Sterling may not have been the poorest speaker Texans had known but he was close. Moody and Senator Walter Woodward were the chief speakers for Sterling, while C.C. McDonald, B.Y. Cummings and others assisted the Fergusons. The campaign was largely a matter of personalities with some people pointing to it as a contest between a successful business man and a perennial politician. Sterling received 473,371 of the 857,773 votes cast in the primary.

The Sterling administration was not bad but the governor found it difficult to accomplish much because of the economic condition which grew constantly worse. He and many other office holders found in 1932 that being in office was a major handicap. Nine candidates sought the Democratic nomination for governor in 1932 and Mrs. Ferguson led the first primary with 402,238 votes. Sterling was second with 296,383. The second primary contest was as bitter and hard fought as any Texan has known. The Fergusons, being out of office, could promise more than Sterling, the office holder, who was limited by some ties with reality. In addition, a vote for the Fergusons was a vote for change and in 1932 most people in both Texas and the United States were anxious for a change. Mrs. Ferguson defeated Sterling in the second primary by a vote of 477,644 to 473,846.

When Mrs. Ferguson stood before Chief Justice C.M. Cureton on January 17, 1933 and took the oath of office as Governor of Texas, it marked the fourth time that a Ferguson had done so. The inaugural ceremony was conducted in the House Chamber and was the first indoor inauguration since 1925. Her address was brief. It pointed out that the state faced many problems and that cooperation between executive and legislative branches was essential. It was similar in many ways to the address Mr. Ferguson had delivered in 1915. She even quoted the same two lines of doggerel:

If you love me as I love you
Nothing can cut our love in two.

Governor Sterling did not attend the inauguration and left no marked Bible in the office.

Those Texans who expected Mrs. Ferguson's second administration to be a copy of the first were pleasantly disappointed. She granted a large number of pardons but there were no highway scandals and no textbook scandals. The administration was marked by an absence of controversy as governor and legislature did what they could to fight the Depression. Measures were passed which declared a moratorium on real estate foreclosures and remitted penalties and interest on delinquent taxes. A constitutional amendment was submitted which exempted $3,000 of the value of a homestead from ad valorem taxes. Constitutional amendments were submitted, and approved on August 26, 1933, authorizing the issuance of $20,000,000 in bonds with the money to be used to aid victims of the Depression and permitting the sale of wine and beer of not more than 3.2% alcoholic content on a local option basis. The bonds for relief were named Bread Bonds and Mrs. Ferguson proclaimed the date of the election as "Bread and Hunger Day." The legislature attempted to reduce state expenditures and the salaries of most state employees were reduced 25%. Tax laws were revised so that the state could benefit more from the production of oil and gas. The East Texas field had been discovered in October, 1930, and helped Texas remain a white spot on the economic condition maps throughout the Depression. An act was passed limiting the time women might work to 9 hours per day and 54 hours per week but with numerous exceptions. It was during this administration that the prison system began the manufacture of license plates and highway signs. One measure of some interest created a committee of two senators and three representatives to designate poets laureate for Texas at appropriate intervals. Most of the poets honored have been named for two years but some appointments have been for only one year. The literary abilities of the selection committee were made clear when the person named was a senator whose best known poem was "That Spotted Sow."

The legislature in 1933 also ratified the XXI Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This amendment repealed the XVIII Amendment which had provided for national prohibition. This step and the approval of the sale of wine and beer in Texas were presented as measures to fight the Depression. The same argument was given for the act which made betting on

horse races legal. A measure creating agencies to plan a Texas Centennial was dictated by time as 1936 was only three years away.

The nation, including Texas, faced a major financial crisis in the early days of March, 1933. Banks in great numbers were failing and it was believed that fears developing in other states might result in runs on Texas banks and cause them to fail. It was hoped, and generally believed, that some drastic step would be taken by the national government immediately following the inauguration of Roosevelt on March 4. Texas banks were closed on March 2 for Independence Day and a number of bankers converged on Austin to seek a solution to the problem. They met during the day with the attorney general, the banking commissioner, other officials and Mr. Ferguson. It was finally decided that the governor should proclaim a banking holiday extending through March 6, Alamo Day. Since March 6 was Monday, it was thought best to extend the holiday through Tuesday, March 7 in order that Texas banks might benefit from any orders or proclamations issued by Federal authorities on Monday.

The proclamation was drawn up in customary form proclaiming the banking holiday extending from March 2 through March 7 and Mrs. Ferguson was called to come to the office and sign it. Before the document was signed Mr. Ferguson saw fit to change the usual language of "By virtue of authority vested in me" to a more nearly accurate "By virtue of authority by me assumed." The proclamation is #13406. Proclamation #13405 grants a convict named Elmer Dillingham a ten day furlough and #13407 grants a convict named W.C. Schultz, Jr. a ninety day furlough. The period of closing was extended a few more days by Federal proclamations.

Mrs. Ferguson was not a candidate in 1934. She attended the inauguration of Allred in January, 1935 but was given no recognition. She evened the score to some extent by leaving a Bible marked to remind the new governor that "the proud shall stumble and fall."

It was generally believed that the Fergusons had made their last campaign and that from 1935 on they would view politics from the sidelines, assisting their friends when possible and criticizing their enemies when the opportunity offered. Certainly most people, including some relatives, were greatly surprised when she announced as a candidate for governor against W. Lee O'Daniel in 1940. The campaign can be explained only by saying that Mr. Ferguson had always been enthusiastic about politics and that she

had come to love it. Her statement, made years later, was that Texas deserved better than O'Daniel. Mrs. Ferguson made a number of radio talks and Mr. Ferguson made a few speeches but they made no serious effort to win. There were eight candidates for the Democratic nomination in 1940 and O'Daniel, as he had done in 1938, gained a majority in the first primary. Mrs. Ferguson was fourth in the race and received 100,578 votes.

Mr. Ferguson died in 1944 following a long illness and was buried in the State Cemetery. By that date, time had erased many of the memories of bitter campaigns and animosities had generally been forgotten. Newspapers and politicians paid him generous tribute. Mrs. Ferguson had a number of years to live and settled easily into the role of elder stateswoman. She endorsed candidates on occasion and was interviewed by the press from time to time.

In several interviews with the author in May, 1953, she talked freely of politics and politicians and of her great love for the game after she became involved in 1924. She declined to answer a question as to which governor she had known ranked as best because she did not wish to apply the term "best" to any of them. She rated Hobby and Sterling as the poorest governors she had known; Allred and Stevenson were ranked as "nothings," and Moody she considered "a nice man but too narrow between the eyes." She did not rank Pat Neff but thought him "a real gentleman." O'Daniel was described as a monkey who should never have been governor. She described Jim as the best speaker she ever heard.

Mrs. Ferguson was eighty on June 13, 1955, and about 300 persons attended a dinner in her honor sponsored by the Austin Jaycees. Governor Allan Shivers served as Master of Ceremonies and, probably for the last time, Mrs. Ferguson was escorted to the speaker's table to the strains of "Put on Your Old Gray Bonnet." Among those in attendance were former governor James V. Allred and Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson.

Mrs. Ferguson died June 25, 1961 and was buried in the State Cemetery beside her husband. There is one headstone for the two graves and on Mrs. Ferguson's side there is carved "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

STAGECOACH ROADS TO MARSHALL

by Max S. Lale

"We passed the broad lane, cut through the tall timber, which showed the boundary line between the United States and the young Republic, and after swimming some streams and traversing divers canebrakes, we reached the house of my friend in safety." Thus the Rev. James Gallaher, a travelling minister of the Presbyterian Church, described the start of a missionary incursion from Shreveport, Louisiana, into the Republic of Texas on horseback in 1845.[1]

In recording his experiences, the Rev. Mr. Gallaher also left a record of the difficulties of travel in the early days of Harrison County's settlement, illuminating thereby the importance which the early settlers placed upon reliable communications. This was especially true of access to the older, more established areas of the United States from which they had migrated. Westward there was little about which to be concerned.

The travelling clergyman described the Marshall toward which he directed his mount as an unprepossessing village of "small log houses covered with clap boards" and with bushes "growing all over the public square and along the streets." Settled some years earlier as the third seat of Harrison County government, Marshall had been incorporated as a municipality by the Ninth Congress only a few months earlier, on December 31, 1844. The town limits were declared by the incorporating statute to "extend one-half mile in a square, so laid off as to leave the public square in the center of said corporation."

The importance of Shreveport and the adjacent states of Louisiana and Arkansas to Marshall's development had been noted even earlier by Charles DeMorse, editor of the Clarksville *Northern Standard*, in a letter from Marshall which appeared in his newspaper on September 24, 1842. Stopping "to have some repairs made on my buggy," DeMorse found the population of Harrison County "is now about 500, and a considerable part of the increase has been composed of people with property — planters with negroes. Shreveport is a convenient medium for landing in this section of county . . .."[2]

After the Congress of the Republic of Texas created Harrison County from a portion of Shelby County on January 8, 1839, an already prospering community which enjoyed river communication with Shreveport assumed new significance to the county's increasing population. This was Port Caddo, twenty

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Max Lale lives in Marshall, Texas.

miles northeast of Marshall on Big Cypress Bayou, which in the years between 1839 and 1845 became an important mail terminus and a trans-shipment point for cotton, hides and other agricultural products.[3] Steamboats operating from Red River by way of Caddo Lake and Big Cypress had begun "to edge over the East Texas border"[4] several years earlier, and by the middle 1840s were reaching Jefferson intermittently. This traffic prompted the Congress to establish a customs office at Port Caddo on January 29, 1845, and to name L.H. Mabitt as collector.[5]

This river connection between Harrison County and Shreveport, unsatisfactory as it was because of fluctuating and unpredictable water levels, was of material benefit to planters with goods to ship and receive. However, it left something to be desired by individuals travelling between Marshall and Shreveport. The answer, obviously, was an improved road connecting the two towns and the establishment of a system of public transportation. At this period on the frontier, this could only mean stagecoaches.

While the imperatives of growth and development weighed heavily on the early settlers, dictating their concern for adequate communications with Shreveport (their nearest contact with the United States), they kept another eye turned constantly toward the distant capitol in Austin. Here was the government, as contrasted with the markets to the east, on which their future also depended. Here were the levers of power which could bring good things to a planter aristocracy. Texas newspapers, which devoted columns in each issue to reports of political activity in Austin, were likewise vital to the aspirations of the local citizenry — if only they could receive them on a regular basis.

The reach of Marshall politicians for the Austin levers did not exceed their grasp. By 1865, two Marshall residents, Edward Clark and Pendleton Murrah, served as governors of the state. Another, Louis T. Wigfall, became both a United States and a Confederate senator. A former governor, J.P. Henderson, chose Marshall for his home after leaving Austin and was elected United States senator while living in the city. Asa Willie became an associate justice of the Texas Supreme Court, and L.D. Evans was elected a member of the U.S. House of Representatives while living in the city. And all occurred only two decades after Marshall was incorporated.[6]

Still, though no less concerned with affairs in Austin than their fellows in Marshall, planters in the eastern section of Harrison County never lost sight of the fact that their livelihood and prosperity depended on the market for their cotton in New